

TO HAWKERS.

At Wolverhampton, I am told, a man has been taken into custody, and held in prison till the next day, and then discharged. This man was selling my Register in that town, on the market day. If he will come to London, I will pay his outside coach hire and other expences, in order that steps may be taken to obtain him redress, or, at least, to make a full exposure of the matter. He must bring with him the full Christian and Surnames of the Magistrate who caused him to be imprisoned, and must be ready to make an affidavit of all the circumstances.—At Coventry, some proceedings, of a somewhat similar nature, have taken place. I wish both the men who have been arrested at Coventry, and again discharged, also to come to London, prepared with all the names and dates and every thing necessary to the adoption of proper proceedings. I wish all these persons to be here on, or immediately after, the eighteenth of February, but not before.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some parts of the last number, owing to an error of the press, were marked Volume 33 in place of Volume 32.—The whole of the numbers beginning with No. 15 of Vol. 31, in short all the numbers of the Register which have been published in a cheap form, are now reprinting, and will be ready for delivery in the course of next week. They will all then be in the pamphlet form; and will make, when put together, a nice little cheap book.—As soon as possible, the former part of Volume 31; that is to say, from the month of June last up to the time when the Cheap Registers began, will be reprinted, and will be sold for about Twenty-pence! so that then, every body will be enabled to have the whole of Volume 31 for about *Four Shillings*; and those who may already have the latter part of the numbers of that volume, in the pamphlet form, may have the former part of that volume for about Twenty pence, as I said before.—I have altered my plan with regard to *Paper against Gold*. I shall make an addition to it, bringing the history of Paper Money down to the present time, and also of the debt, taxes, &c. I shall print two editions of it, one, upon fine large paper, to be retailed for ten shillings; and one, for the use of schools, and of young persons in general, to be sold retail for four shillings, bound in boards.—This new arrangement will cause a week's delay in the Pub-

lication.—I am also preparing a work to be entitled, "COBBETT'S PARLIAMENTARY REGISTER," which will include a complete abridgement of the Proceedings of the whole Session in one Volume, with all useful public accounts, &c. This will be published at the close of the Session, and will be sold for ten shillings on large paper, and four shillings upon the common paper.

A LETTER
TO
LORD SIDMOUTH.

On calling out the Yeomanry, &c.—On the Prince's Speech.—The Vulgar have eyes to see.—Base Demagogues.—Lord Cochrane's motion in defence of the Reformers.—Liverpool Vestry Extraordinary.

London, 30th Jan. 1817.

MY LORD.—It is now about 27 years, since BURKE, who soon afterwards became a great pensioner for life, with a reversionary pension to his wife, and on whose *executors*, for *three lives*, two large grants of the public money, annually paid out of the taxes, is settled; it is now about 27 years since that man drew his quill against the Parliamentary Reformers, whom he designated by all sorts of foul appellations, and, to stifle the principles of whom, he cried aloud for that war, which, after having, by its final success on the Continent of Europe, restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition, has left this country in a state of misery, which I believe to be without a parallel in the history of civilized man. It is now about 24 years, since Mr. GREY (now Lord Grey) presented to the House of Commons a Petition on the subject of the state of the representation, and praying for a Reform of that House. That petition has laid on

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the table of the House from that day to this, and nothing has been done respecting it. No one has ever attempted to deny its allegations, or any part of them. It is now about 24 years since the sword was drawn, and the leagues entered into against the people of France, and since new, and heretofore unheard of, penal statutes were passed to keep down the spirit of *Jacobinism*, as it was called, but which was visible only in the shape of *Reform*.

Now, my Lord, look back over these years of prosecutions, imprisonments, transportings, hangings, quarterings, and bloodshed, in every way in which blood can be shed! Look back across this scene of human woe, and reflect on the situation of this kingdom at the outset of the contest! In the year 1792, before the fatal war began, the annual expence on account of the *Debt* was less than *nine millions*; that charge is now more than *forty-four millions*. The annual amount of the poor-rates was then about *two and a quarter millions*; that amount was, last year, *eight millions*, and, this year, it will, probably, be nearer twelve millions than eight. *Crimes*, the increase of which is the most certain as well as the most lamentable proof of an increase of the misery and degradation of a people, have increased in a degree equal to the increase of the *Debt* and *Taxes*. The whole of the taxes, in 1792, amounted to less than *sixteen millions*. Last year they amounted to nearly *seventy millions*. We do not possess an account of all the *crimes* in so accurate a way; but, from returns laid before the House of Commons up to 1809, it appeared, that, taking the country all through, crimes had increased with the increase of taxes; and, from a paper, transmitted to me some time ago by Mr. W. GOODMAN of WARWICK, and which paper he also transmitted to Sir Richard Phillips, who has inserted it in his excellent Magazine for this Month, it appears, that for the County of Warwick, the num-

ber of prisoners tried in 1792, was *one hundred and six*; and that the number of prisoners tried for the same County in 1816 was *five hundred and twenty*. There can be little doubt, that the increase of crimes is in nearly the same proportion throughout the whole kingdom; and, surely, a more melancholy fact never was made known to the world.

When the war was *at an end*; when the "*new doctrines*," as they were called, had been trampled under foot by our government and its allies upon the Continent, your Lordship must remember into what insolent strains of triumph the *Times* newspaper and its readers burst forth! However these persons, not satisfied yet, then began to put forth their declarations, that the republic of *America* must also be subdued; they said (or, at least, *WALTER* did,) in direct terms, that it was necessary to the tranquillity of the world, that the American Government should be *overthrown*; that "*this mischievous example of the success of Democratic Rebellion*" should be destroyed. And, all the London newspapers published, under the title of a speech, delivered by *SIR JOSEPH YORKE* (one of the Lords of the Admiralty) in the House of Commons, just after the fall of Napoleon, a declaration, that more was yet to do, for that *James Madison* was not yet *dethroned*!

Alas! My Lord, you know but too well how that war was carried on, and how it ended! And you also know, that Mr. *MADISON*, after a most glorious career as the Chief Magistrate of a free and happy people, has now retired to spend his old age as a private citizen, beholding his country settled in perfect peace and uncommon prosperity.

And, how does your Lordship, at the end of this quarter of a century of war, find *Old England*? How does she stand at the close of this long contest against the principles of democracy, as we called them? How has peace found her? In 1814, when

the Kings and "Old Blucher" were feasted and huzzaed, and when the country was all in a blaze with bonfires and illuminations and fires to roast oxen; in that hour of the triumph of WALTER and STEWART and all the swarm of corruption; in that hour of drunken joy, I, for my part, not only mourned, but I openly expressed my mourning, and I gave my *reasons* for that mourning, and put them upon indelible record. I saw that my country was ruined; I saw that days of deep and lasting misery were at hand. When the overseer of my tything came to ask my subscription towards the ox, which had been led by my door, decorated with orange-coloured ribbons: "No," said I, "Mr. HAINES, I will keep my money for the time, when this bawling and feasting and boozing will be turned into cries of distress and starvation, which time is at no great distance." Mr. Haines's civility prevented him from laughing in my face, in which respect he was more civil than the public in general. But, my Lord, a short time has proved my apprehensions to have been but too well founded. I had long seen, that the system of Paper-Money, and Debts and Funds and Standing Armies could not go on in *peace*, without the utter ruin and starvation of all labouring classes. This was *proved* in "PAPER AGAINST GOLD," and the principles had been asserted and enforced by me many years before. It was under this conviction, that, so early as the year 1804, when the annual charge of the Debt was not much more than the *half of its present amount*, I most anxiously laboured to produce a *change of system*. After thirteen years of unpopularity and obloquy, I have lived to see the truth of my opinions *recognized* by ninety-nine hundredths of the people, and not openly *denied*, or, if denied at all, by mere *assertion*, unsupported by any show of argument. I have lived to see *more than a hundred public newspapers* adopting all my formerly reprobated doctrines about the Debt,

the Sinking Fund, the Funding System, the effects of Taxation, the Pauperizing degradation, and, indeed, the whole of that set of doctrines, by which I was distinguished only to be censured or ridiculed.

Now, my Lord, this is a wonderful change! It is a complete revolution in the mind of a whole nation. A far more important revolution it is than that of 1688, which very justly expelled one Royal Family and introduced another in its stead; and, if there be any two points, upon which men are now more unanimous than upon any of the others, connected with politics, it is these two; namely; *first, that taxation produces misery, and misery crimes*; and, *second, that the only effectual remedy for these dreadful evils, under which the nation is now smarting, writhing and groaning, is, a radical Reform in the Commons', or People's House of Parliament*. Upon these points the public mind is made up. The truth of the positions has been demonstrated so clearly; and the impression of this truth upon the public mind is so deeply engraven, that it is impossible for any human power to remove it.

This being the state of things, it is hardly necessary for me to tell your Lordship, that your Letter to the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Leicester, as published in the *Courier* of Saturday last, has given me an uncommon degree of pain, and especially as being signed with *your name*. Saving much of disapprobation, which I have often expressed with as much openness as I dared, I have had some things to say in cordial approbation of your Lordship as one of the servants of the king; and, I shall always recollect, that, when, just upon the eve of that trial which ended in so heavy a punishment on me, some of the base wretches of the press had asserted, that you paid me money for writing a paper, in 1803, calling upon the people to defend their country against the menaced attack of the French; I shall always recollect, with

what promptitude and kindness your Lordship, in a paper under your own hand, enabled me to refute this base and malignant accusation. There is also another fact, which, in justice to your Lordship, I ought, at this critical moment, to state. And that is, that GILLRAY, the caricaturist of St. JAMES'S Street, who, when your Lordship became prime minister in 1801, exhibited you in such odious colours, confessed to me, that he did it, *because you had stopped his pension of two hundred pounds a year.* I could mention others, whose enmity your Lordship was honoured with on the same ground; and, my real belief now is, that if you had had a reformed Parliament to co-operate with you, England would have recovered from her blows, and would have been, at this day, a flourishing, happy and contented nation. But, alas! the *system* was too strong for your wishes. You were compelled, either to sink, or to go with the stream.

In your letter to the Lord Lieutenant, you call upon him to recommend to the Magistrates to swear in the *respectable house-holders as Special Constables* for a space of time not less than *three months*, and also to communicate to the commanders of *Yeomanry Corps* the wish of the government that they would hold their Corps in a state of *preparation* to afford *prompt assistance to the Civil Authorities*, in case of necessity; and your Lordship tells him, that the *reason* is, that it is, "*expedient under the present circumstances of the Country, that the Civil Powers should be strengthened.*" This being the *reason* for the measure, it is of great importance to enquire, what those *circumstances of the Country really are.*

Great must have been your Lordship's grief, when you put your hand to this Letter; for, what does it say? Why, that, after a quarter of a century of taxation, paupering, loans and wars, a peace has been obtained with all the world, and that, at the end of more than two years of this peace,

such a measure as this is necessary, and that the ordinary powers of the magistrates and peace officers, great as they have been made of late years, are even now insufficient to insure the public tranquillity; and that, too, though we have a large standing regular army, such as our forefathers never dreamt of, and while we have actually a large army of Englishmen in France for the purpose of preserving tranquillity *there*, and of upholding the family of Bourbon. This is what your Lordship's letter will say to all the world.

What then *are* these "Circumstances of the Country?" Are they such as to call for military force? But, I will postpone the consideration of this question till I come to offer your Lordship some remarks on the latter part of the SPEECH delivered to the Parliament on Tuesday last. That Tuesday, my Lord, was a very important day. It will, hereafter be so considered; and, as I was a considerable actor in that day's affairs, I will by and by give the history of them, as far as they came within my knowledge, without the smallest disguise or reservation. I will tell your Lordship all the *secrets* of the Reformers, and then you will see clearly what sort of measures are necessary in order to put them down.

The first part of the Speech I shall pass over, the war against Algiers and the wars in Hindostan being of not so much importance in my eyes as the case of only one single starving English Manufacturer. But, the state of the *revenue* and of the *finances* is of real importance, and therefore, of the part of the Speech, which relates to that I shall take particular notice. His Royal Highness, the Regent, is represented to have said "I have directed the Estimates for the current year to be laid before you. They have been formed upon a full consideration of all the present circumstances of the country, with an anxious desire to make every reduction in our establishments which the safety of the empire and

"sound policy allow. I recommend
 "the state of the Public Income and
 "Expenditure to your early and se-
 "rious attention. I regret to be under
 "the necessity of informing you that
 "there has been a *deficiency in the pro-*
 "*duce of the Revenue* in the last year;
 "but I *trust* that it is to be ascribed to
 "*temporary causes*; and I have the
 "consolation to believe that you will
 "find it practicable to provide for the
 "public service of the year, without
 "making additions to the burthens of
 "the people, and without adopting
 "any measure *injurious to that system*
 "by which the *public credit* of the
 "country has been hitherto sustained."

Now, my Lord, first permit me to remind you and the nation, that I said, *last year*, that this would be the case; that, for several years, I have been warning the government of what has now happened; that I specifically foretold, that the Revenue would fall off thus, and especially in a letter, published in the Register in the month of October, 1815, where not only this *consequence* was clearly pointed out, but where also the *causes* were fully developed, and developed so clearly as to show, that subjects of this nature were not, as Mr. Dawson appears to suppose, "*quite above the comprehen-*
 "*sion of the vulgar.*" Indeed, my Lord, I believe that there are now very few of the people, who do not clearly understand these matters, or, at least, of that part of the people, who have been long in the practice of reading my writings.

I knew the Revenue would fall off, and I now say, that it will not, during the year 1817, yield a clear amount of more than 35 millions. I give this as my decided and settled opinion. My Lord, I wish with all my heart I could see that ground for *trust* and *consolation*, which his Royal Highness has told the Parliament he perceives. But I really can see no such ground, unless I am to conclude that there is a fair prospect of our seeing a radical reform in the Commons' House of Parliament. Were that Reform to take place, I have, in

my No. 15, of Vol. 31, which number was written on the twelfth of October last, shown, as I think very clearly, that there would be good ground for trust and consolation; but short of the measures there pointed out, I can see no such ground. It is to me, my Lord, quite melancholy to hear Gentlemen in high station founding their hopes on the possible revival of *commerce*, by which they always mean external trade; and to hear our calamities imputed to the loss of our customers *abroad*. If this doctrine were correct, there would be no hope; for, not only are the very roots of that commerce cut up, but a rival commerce has grown up to supply its place. But, my Lord, it is *internal* trade and commerce; it is the fruit of our soil; it is the production of our labour; it is the value of our capital; it is the quick movement of money from hand to hand; it is the production and re-production; it is the creation of the means of health and strength; it is the fair distribution of those means; it is the happiness of the people; it is the important effect of that confidence between man and man in pecuniary affairs, which makes one man's word be received as money by another man; it is that invaluable thing called *credit* between man and man. These are the objects worthy of the attention of a statesman. All these have been tremendously diminished; and without a very great change in that identical system of what is called *public credit*, and which system his Royal Highness expresses his wish to see persevered in; I frankly confess to your Lordship that I do not see the smallest ground to hope that any part of the nation's sufferings will be temporary.

My Lord, all the means of national wealth, power, and happiness, save and except good laws and liberty, must arise from the *land*. We are not, on this account, to esteem those who own or who till the land more than we esteem the rest of the community; but, it is from the land that all must arise. It is notorious that

those who till the land of this kingdom are in a ruined state. The average price of farm produce has fallen much more than one-half. And, here, my Lord, give me leave to remind you of an expression of your colleague, Lord Castlereagh, towards the close of the last session of Parliament. A great deal had been said, by Mr. Western and others, about the want of *price*. The farmers only wanted *price*. The agricultural correspondents, the agricultural societies, all over the kingdom; the movers of resolutions in the House of Commons; the authors of numerous pamphlets, in behalf of the poor unfortunate farmers; Lord Sheffield and his wool people at Lewes; the wool-growing delegates and their convention: all these several individuals, and all these tribes of projectors, called aloud for *high price*; high price was what they wanted; give them but high price, and they would continue to pay taxes, to get drunk at the markets, and to swear at and ride over people, on their return home. "Well!" said Lord Castlereagh, in the month of May last, "then the distress is *temporary* only; for I perceive that wheat is rising in price. I see that in Scotland wheat is already got up to eighty shillings a quarter, and it is not likely that it should long keep below that price in any other part of the kingdom. And, when wheat is got up to eighty shillings a quarter all over the kingdom; I shall be glad to know where will THEN be the distress?"

His Lordship's argument was very fair against Mr. Western, Mr. Coke, and the other gentlemen of *high price*. It was absolutely a *flail* (against which his countryman, Swift, says there is no argument) upon the heads of the silly farmers and their friends: but, as against me, and those who thought with me, the ingenious Lord's argument was not worth a straw; for, I told him, as I had told the Corn-bill gentlemen a year before, that *high price*, unless it were occasioned by fresh bales of paper-money, sent forth

by the Old Lady in Threadneedle Street, and her more than thousand children, who are distributed all over the country; I told them, and had been telling them for years, that, unless prices were kept up by *this cause*, there could be no price, be it as high as it might, which would save the farmer and the tradesman from ruin, and the journeyman and labourer from a state approaching to starvation. And now, my Lord, pray look at the *result*. Wheat is now, not *eighty* shillings a quarter, but a *hundred and ten* shillings a quarter; and that too, your Lordship will please to observe, while all those *ports are open*, which the silly and greedy farmers were for keeping for ever closed. "Where will *then* be the distress, said Lord Castlereagh, if wheat gets up to eighty shillings a quarter?" It has got up to a hundred and ten shillings a quarter, and the distress is greater than ever!

And thus must it go on, unless new bales of paper money can be got out, or unless taxation be greatly reduced. The fruit of productive labour is now taken and given to unproductive labour in such a large proportion, that production and re-production, with all their wonderful effects, are daily and hourly diminishing. *This* is the cause and the only cause, of the miseries of the country, and of the far greater part of the crimes that now blacken the calenders of the Sessions and the assizes. It is curious to observe that His Royal Highness has been advised to ascribe the national distress partly to the "unfavourable state of the *season*." Why, my Lord, it is that very season which has caused that very *high price*, upon the return of which the Corn-bill conjurors most seriously relied, as the infallible means of the renovation of their affairs, and of the restoration of prosperity. So that here we find ourselves in this curiously interesting dilemma, that, while his Royal Highness is advised by his Ministers to lament the existence of a season which has casually

produced *high prices*, the whole corps of land-owners and farmers, divided into battalions and platoons throughout the counties and the hundreds, are bellowing with lungs of Stentor, and with the constancy of the pendulum of a clock, for the creation and continuation of *high prices*, as the only remedy for all our difficulties, and as the sole means of restoring the nation to ease and happiness.

For us, poor mortals, whom Mr. Dawson describes as meddling with matters *quite above our vulgar comprehension*; for us, it is not to attempt to extricate the parties out of this dilemma, and I will, therefore, with your Lordship's permission, proceed humbly to offer you some observations on the other parts of the speech.

His Royal Highness expresses his satisfaction, at having to inform the Parliament that the new Silver Coin will immediately find its way into circulation; and he is pleased to express his "trust that this measure will be productive of *considerable advantages* to the trade and internal transactions of the country."

Now, my Lord, though one of the "vulgar," I have presumed to turn some portion of my attention to subjects connected with money and currency. I do, indeed, perceive great *advantages* that will *ultimately* result from the sending forth of a silver coinage, consisting of pieces having a fixed and intrinsic value; and I, for one of the vulgar, thank his Majesty's ministers for this measure. It will drive out of circulation a considerable quantity of that fictitious trash, of those despicable and dirty rags, which have long been an eye-sore to me. We shall now, to a limited extent at any rate, hear our tills once again rattle, our pockets chink with the sound of something real; and, if men are brought to the gallows for counterfeiting here, it will be, as in good old times, for counterfeiting the King's coin. And permit me here to express a hope, that, when a gold coinage comes out, it will come out

under the old-fashioned names of *guineas* and *half-guineas*, and not, as the newspapers told us it would, under the name of *sovereigns* and *demi-sovereigns*, which would have seemed to indicate a sort of longing for that doctrine of *legitimacy*, which, as your Lordship well knows, is contrary to all the principles which were entertained by our forefathers, which are recorded by all the great writers on our laws, and which were never attempted to be deviated from without producing revolution or civil war.

But, my Lord, what advantage, in any other respect than that mentioned above, are we to derive from the issue of new silver coin? For every shilling which I receive in this new silver coin, I must give a shilling, either in the debased silver of the present day, or in some of the aforesaid rags. Therefore, I can see no possibility of an increase upon the whole of the quantity of circulating medium from this cause, and, consequently no increase of the means of paying taxes. But, I will tell you what I can see, and that is, a strong returning affection for real money, and a proportionate disaffection for its usurping representative. In short, my Lord, the new coinage will, in various ways, produce, in my opinion, a diminution of the whole quantity of circulating medium, that is to say, if the coins be of their former real value; and if they be not of their former real value, the coin of the country will have undergone a permanent alteration. Still, however, this will not, in any considerable degree, lessen the effect which I contemplate, and at any rate, it appears to me quite impossible that trade and internal transactions can become more *brisk*, can, furnish more employment, can increase in magnitude and celerity, in consequence of this issue; and, therefore, I must ascribe to that want of comprehension, which Mr. Dawson so indulgently ascribes to the vulgar, my incapacity to understand this part of the speech of his Royal Highness. For the ten thousandth time, permit

me to say it, my Lord, (for I have proved it above a hundred several times) that it is the diminution which has taken place in the whole quantity of the circulating medium, that has been the proximate cause, or, to speak in the language of the *vulgar*, in deference to Mr. Dawson, the nearest cause of the ruin of so many thousands of farmers and tradesmen of all descriptions; that has produced, all of a sudden, so many bankrupts, and that has sent so many honest and industrious men and their families, to those Poor Houses which now swarm like so many bee-hives. Oh! no, my Lord, it is not a "*sudden transition from war to peace*," it is not this; but it is a sudden transition from paper-money, worth from *thirteen to fifteen* shillings the pound note, to a paper-money of which the pound note is worth *twenty* shillings; or, in other words, it is a sudden transition from taxes to the amount of *thirteen* shillings to taxes to the amount of *twenty* shillings; and this accompanied too, with all the astonishing effects of a state of things, in which a pound note *moves from hand to hand but twice*, where it used to move from hand to hand, probably *eight or ten* times.—But, having the fear of Mr. Dawson before my eyes, and knowing that he will not include your Lordship amongst the *vulgar*, I will not presume to trespass upon your time by extending my observations upon this subject, and we hasten to the concluding, and much most important part of his Royal Highness's speech, in the following words:

"The *distresses* consequent upon the termination of a war of such unusual extent and duration, have been felt, with greater or less severity, *throughout all the nations of Europe*; and have been considerably aggravated by the unfavourable state of the season.—Deeply as I lament the pressure of these evils upon this country, I am sensible that they are of a nature *not to admit of an immediate remedy*; but

"whilst I observe with peculiar satisfaction the *fortitude* with which so many privations have been borne, and the active *benevolence* which has been employed to mitigate them, I am persuaded that the great sources of our national prosperity, are essentially *unimpaired*, and I entertain a confident expectation that the *native energy of the country* will at no distant period surmount all the difficulties in which we are involved.—In considering our internal situation you will, I doubt not, feel a just indignation at the attempts which have been made to take advantage of the *distresses of the country*, for the purpose of *exciting a spirit of sedition and violence*.—I am too well convinced of the loyalty and good sense of the great body of his Majesty's subjects, to believe them capable of being perverted by the *arts* which are employed to *seduce them*; but I am determined to omit no precautions for preserving the public peace, and for counteracting the designs of the *disaffected*; and I rely with the utmost confidence on your cordial support and co-operation, in upholding a system of law and government, from which we have derived inestimable advantages, which has enabled us to conclude, with *unexampled glory*, a contest whereon depended the best interests of mankind, and which has been hitherto felt by ourselves, as it is acknowledged by other nations, to be *the most perfect that has ever fallen to the lot of any people*."

My Lord, it is out of my power to say, precisely, what is the situation of the people "throughout all the nations of Europe," where the sovereigns have formed what *they* call a *Holy Alliance*; and I can easily believe, that there is distress enough in France, where the massacre of Protestants immediately succeeded the restoration of the House of Bourbon, and in Spain, where the restoration of the Inquisition immediately succeeded the restoration of the same

House. I can easily believe, also, that the Bourbons and bigotry have not failed to bring misery in their train in re-occupying the beautiful provinces of Italy. But, my Lord, I do not like, when *comparisons* are set on foot, to confine my view to Europe, and to those countries which are as much strangers to the laws of England, and to the principles and manners of our ancestors, as they are to the language of England. I prefer rather, if a comparison must be forced upon me, to cast my eyes, for the subject of that comparison, to that country which, being the haunt of savages and wild beasts, about a hundred years ago, was then first visited by Englishmen, and in which country, by the legislation of a PENN, and by the writings of a PAINE, and by men acting upon their principles of legislation and of politics, a government has been raised and a nation has grown up, worthy to be referred to as a subject of comparison upon an occasion like the present. That country too, my Lord, has been at war, and has been engaged in a war of no common magnitude and interest. A free people have there been called forth to defend, single-handed, not their exposed shores only, but their towns, their metropolis, the public buildings of which they have seen in flames; but their very houses, and not only their *fire-sides*, but their *bed-sides*, against the single-handed efforts of this mighty nation. War was not a thing *talked of* in America: it was a thing felt. During the whole of that war (and I beg your Lordship to note well the fact,) though the country was actually invaded in many points at once; though one district had actually been compelled to yield obedience, as a conquest, to the arms of the enemy, and though the capital city was in flames, and the executive authority compelled to retreat from it; though this was the situation of that country, Mr. President MADISON, to his immortal honour be it recorded, never called for, never solicited, never received, any other support or means

of protection to his government, than that which he derived, in times of profound peace, from the settled course of the laws, and from the ordinary proceedings of courts of justice; nor was there one single American, during the whole of that perilous conflict, punished, or imprisoned, on a charge of rebellion, sedition or disaffection.

Well, my Lord! *peace* came to America. That free country was again blessed with peace; and, as your Lordship very well remembers, nothing could possibly come more *suddenly*. It came at a time when no human being expected it. Yet, the "*sudden transition from war to peace*" produced in that country none of those dreadful effects, which we now witness in *our own*; and, since his Royal Highness has been advised by his ministers to introduce a comparison into his speech, it will, I humbly hope, be permitted to me to observe, that, while his ROYAL HIGHNESS has to *regret* that the revenue in *England* is marked by a *deficiency*, Mr. MADISON has had to *congratulate* the people of *America*, that their revenue, even with a *large diminution* of the number of taxes, has been marked, by a *surplus*, to more than one fourth of the amount of the whole of the national expenditure! Therefore, though it be generally allowed that comparisons are odious, and though I, for my part, wish by no means to make use of a comparison for the purpose of giving a tone of aggravation to our sufferings, I most humbly trust, that, seeing that the nations of Europe have been so pointedly referred to, and produced as a sort of proof that national calamity and misery are inseparable from a "*sudden transition from war to peace*," it will not require any very great effort of charity, even on the part of Mr. DAWSON, to find an excuse for me, in making this reference to the situation of the American republic.

I am as sensible, (if a *vulgar* man can be permitted to be sensible at all) as his Royal Highness says he is, that the

evils which press upon this country, "are not of a nature to admit of an *immediate* remedy;" that is to say, not of a complete remedy, and not very immediate; but I am in hopes, that, if any one will turn his Royal Highness's attention to that *Number Fifteen* which I had the honour to mention to your Lordship above, he would perceive, that a great deal might be done *immediately*, and that a *complete* cure for all these evils might very soon be effected. If by "*active benevolence*" his Royal Highness is pleased to allude to the *Soup* establishments, I cannot say that I agree with him in viewing them with "*peculiar satisfaction*." I view them, on the contrary, with regret and with shame, especially when I recollect, that there is a code of Poor Laws, which ought to insure to every person in distress, without any exception, not only the means of preserving life, but the means of comfortable subsistence. Upon the same ground I would wish to be enabled to contradict a statement in the *Courier*, of the twenty-eighth of this month, expressing, that beds and blankets, from the public stores of the navy, had been placed at the disposal of your Lordship, as Secretary of State, and that you were dispensing them to the several parishes in and near London. In the first place, my Lord, I know of no *law* that places in the Secretary of State a power, to give away at his pleasure, any public stores whatever. On the contrary, I am sure that it is unlawful, and that the persons, who had legally the charge of those stores, are, by law, answerable for them to the public. This is not only, then, a new office, attached to the Secretary of State, but it is a new source of patronage and power; and, though I do not believe that your Lordship would make use of this power for any corrupt purpose, I know that you must leave this dispensation to other hands, and that I can see no security whatever against a very gross abuse of it. Besides, my Lord, what right has St.

Margaret's Parish, for instance, or Chelsea Parish, to boons of this sort; any more than the parishes of Manchester, of Middleton, of Glasgow, or of any other? No, my Lord, it is not by boons of this sort; it is not by what is called "*active benevolence*," that this nation is to be relieved, or that it is to receive any thing even to mitigate its sufferings. The stores, thus given away, must be paid for out of the public taxes, and the money given in subscriptions must be deducted from the means of paying rates. The misery to the poor, and the ruin amongst the middle classes are *general*, and to general evils, general remedies must be applied, for they admit of no other.

What his Royal Highness may mean by the "*native energy of the country*," it would perhaps be presumptuous in a *vulgar* man to affect to comprehend; but, if a vulgar man may be permitted to state his doubts upon the subject, I would take the liberty to observe, that every thing connected with trade, commerce, manufactures, agriculture, and even science, must depend, in a great measure, for its prosperity, upon political and civil institutions and regulations; and that I am not aware of any thing belonging to our *natures* capable of struggling against the pressure of that heavy load of taxes, which we have now to support. Therefore, my Lord, I place no reliance upon this "*native energy*," unless in as far as it may be exerted in legally and peaceably endeavouring to obtain that Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, to which I think we are entitled, and to which I have looked for more than eleven years, as the only means of restoring the nation to happiness.

His Royal Highness next speaks of the internal situation of the country in these words. "I doubt not, you will feel a *just indignation* at the attempts which have been made to take *advantage* of the distresses of the country for the purpose of exci-

"ring a spirit of *sedition and violence*." He afterwards speaks of the *arts* employed to *seduce* the people.

Now, my Lord, this never can be meant to apply to those, who have been speaking and writing in the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*; because, in the first place, the cause of parliamentary reform has had nothing at all to do with the *seasons*. That cause has been on foot for *forty years*; it has, in the hands of Major Cartwright, at least, never slept one single hour during those forty years. There were just as much zeal and industry employed upon the subject twenty-five years ago, as at this day. It was supported through the war as well as now in peace. No *advantage* whatever has been taken of the *season*; and of this your Lordship must be well assured, if you will but candidly look back to the proceedings of the Reformers for the last three years in particular. And what *arts* have any of us, who write and speak, made use of to *seduce* any body? Our *secrets* are kept as close as those which an old man tells to a young wife! They have been uttered from the house-top. They have been spoken at public meetings; they have been written with the writers' names. They have been published at *Licensed Presses*. They have been stamped and registered by public officers. These are wonderful *secrets*! Yet, these are all that the reformers have. These are the *arts*, if Reformers use arts. At public meetings men of all parties may *speak*. Men of all parties may *write*. Those who have most *truth* on their side must finally prevail. What need, then, can there be to fear either orators or penmen; unless they have truth on their side? The Reformers have no power other than which is given them by *truth and reason*; and, shall they not make use of *these*? We have no money to hire writers or speakers. We have no persons to keep up posting-bills which are calculated to serve our cause. We have no means of bribery or corruption, and of course, we are

unable, utterly unable, to *seduce* any body.

As to *me*, though I am what Mr. Dawson calls a "*vulgar*" man, I take great care *never* to utter a *sedition* word, or a word calculated to produce *violence*. On the contrary, I defy the Attorney General, and even the Devil himself, to produce from my writings any one essay, which is not written in the spirit of peace, and which does not tend to encourage patience and fortitude in the people. Not, indeed, peace towards the vile and wicked wretches, who have employed the press for the purpose of misrepresenting and calumniating the people, and for that of causing them to distrust and persecute and murder each other. Towards these mean wretches I have, and I can have, no feeling but that of hatred, and I have spoken of them in the spirit of hatred accordingly.

But, my Lord, as the tree is known by its fruit, so are our "*arts*" known by their *effects*, which are the fruits of actions. I repeat, then, for the twentieth time, that meetings for Reform have been uniformly attended with *peace* and tranquillity. In no one instance has a reform meeting produced a single breach of the peace. Very different was the effect of the Church and King Meetings stirred up by "*The Loyal Association at the Crown and Anchor against Republicans and Levellers*." Those meetings led to burnings in effigy; to the firing and pulling down of houses; to the ducking of people in horse-ponds; and to all sorts of outrages; and, it is remarkable enough, that Downes in the Strand, who was *printer* to that famous Society, is also the printer of the libellous Posting-Bill against Mr. HUNT, of the history of which Bill your Lordship will, probably, by this time, have heard the particulars, and very interesting particulars they will be found to be.

Therefore, my Lord, I wish his Royal Highness had been advised to express himself, in this part of his

speech more in *particulars*; for I submit to your Lordship, whether it be not liable to produce a bad effect, for half a million of men, who have met peaceably to petition for Reform, to suppose themselves designated under appellations so little honourable to them either as Englishmen, or as human beings. For, my Lord, though they may, by some persons, be called "the vulgar," and regarded as not capable of comprehending high subjects, they have hearts to feel, and, they cannot but recollect too, that it was men in their rank of life, yea, their fathers, brothers, sons and kindred, who fought and bled in those battles, of which the Speech eulogizes the "*glorious result*." They cannot but know and reflect on these things. They know, too, that "*vulgar*" as they are, they were not thought too vulgar to be called out into the Army of Reserve, the Militia, the Local Militia, the Levy-en-Mass, the Volunteers, in defence of the country; and, if your Lordship say, as I say, that it was *their duty* to come forth in these capacities, I hope, and, indeed, I am sure you will be too just to say, that they have no right to meet and to petition for whatever they may deem the birth-right of Englishmen. There may be, as there have been, men to call us the "*Swinish Multitude*," and to say, that we have "*no business with the Laws but to obey them*;" but your Lordship is not one of those men; and, at a moment when a cordial union of us, heart and hand, is wanted to save even the remnants of our prosperity, I do feel confident, that your Lordship will not yield to the suggestions of those men, be they who they may, who think contemptuously of the people.

The people, my Lord, are not so *stupid* as some persons imagine them to be. I find no people *really ignorant*, but those who despise, or affect to despise the mass of the people. The people read, they talk, they think, and misery sharpens their understandings. They know well, that "*vul-*

"*gar*" as they are, they pay their full share of *taxes*. They are not told this for their *information*; for they know it well. Yet are they docile and good-humoured. They discover no impatience, much less "*an ignorant impatience*." They are brave, loyal, and industrious, and all they want to make them prosperous, happy and contented, is, in my opinion, that voice in choosing members of parliament, to which I think, and to which most of them think, they are entitled.

Such being the real state of the case, my Lord, I was grieved to read the close of his Royal Highness's Speech, and I deeply lament, that he was not advised to hold a language less expressive of his displeasure. Every one wishes the peace to be preserved, except, indeed, the writers in the corrupt newspapers, who are seeking to foment disputes and to produce, it appears to me, civil carnage. It seems, indeed, next to impossible, that they can have any *other* object in view. For, they nowhere see any riots, any disturbances, any violences, any breaches of the peace, where there are Meetings for Reform; and, which is very curious, since these meetings have taken place, and have excited hope in the bosoms of the people, even the *Luddites* have ceased their depredations. And, when this is as "*notorious as the Sun at noon-day*," is it not audacious and wicked to the last degree in these corrupt writers, to endeavour to attribute to the Reformers a desire to disturb the public peace, and to carry their point by force of arms? The people, my Lord, want *bread*. They are, in Lancashire and several other Counties, nearly upon the point of *starving*! This is no exaggeration. I am able, at the bar of the Lords, if you please, to prove what I say, in the most rigorous sense of the words. Good God! What a state is this for Englishmen to be brought to! Say, that the evil cannot, all at once, be remedied! But, my Lord, it can be softened by keeping hope alive in the suffering bosoms of these our un-

happy countrymen; for, "*vulgar*" as they may be, they are our *countrymen*, and they have blood in their veins, and hearts in their bosoms.— They have the feelings of parents and of children, and have as much right to seek to preserve life and enjoy happiness as Daniel Stewart and John Walter, or any body else. In such a case one ounce of *conciliation* is worth a ton of *menace*; and yet it is at this moment, at this dismal moment, when there are, probably, millions who open their eyes in the morning without knowing where to look for a breakfast, that the writers in the *COURIER* and the *TIMES* are calling for the enactment of laws of the most rigorous and cruel description! These men, who were incessant in their cries for the blood of the brave Marshal Ney, really seem to thirst for the blood of the people of England. They seek to make riots and plots, and to set all the nation in a flame. If they should succeed, woeful indeed will be the consequences. If once they blow the embers into a blaze, the land will be covered with desolation and mourning. Only think, my Lord, of the *despair* of millions of men, to whom death is nearly as welcome as the morning light! What deeds one mind is capable of devising, when it is at war with the world, some poet has described; what, then, must be the consequences of thousands and hundreds of thousands of minds, all at one time in this horrible state!

It was from considerations like these, that I was led to hope for something very *conciliatory* in the Speech of his Royal Highness, and that I still cling to the hope, that the Parliament will listen with patience to the prayers of the people, and not reject them, at any rate, without giving to the Bill, which I *know* will be moved for, all that attention and discussion, which the subject so loudly and so reasonably bespeaks. As to the *Amendments* to the Address, which are reported to have been moved by Mr. Ponsonby, they appear to me to have been of very

little importance. The mass of the people feel no interest in them. They go merely to state what all the world knows; namely, that it is impossible to meet the expenditure on its present scale. They might have gone much further in this way. They might have argued and shown, that the Revenue would not, in future, meet the *Debt* without a cessation of that thing, humorously called "*the Sinking Fund*." But, we want no ghost to tell us this. We see, indeed, that it is now acknowledged, that the *system* can no longer go on *entire*; but this the Prince has pretty plainly and very wisely, told us in his Speech; and, if the bold language of Mr. VANSITTART, at the opening of the last Session, when he said, that an Englishman must be *base* who would not prefer the *then* situation of England to the situation of England in 1792; if this speech could be forgotten, we might feel compassion for that gentleman at this moment.

But, my Lord, I cannot conclude the history of Tuesday without noticing an expression or two, which the newspapers have ascribed to Mr. Dawson, relative to the debt and the taxes, which are as follows: "It should be recollected, that the government and the people had great and imperious duties to perform; and it became the people to consider, that, in *encouraging* and in *extending* the government to prosecute the late arduous contest, and also in *participating* the glories which marked the progress and result of that contest, they were bound *patiently* to bear the burthens, and *honestly* to discharge the debts, which, through that contest, were inevitably contracted." Now, my Lord, though I do not like to accuse any gentlemen, and particularly a member of parliament, of theft, nor do I know, indeed, but it has been the newspaper editors, who have, upon this occasion, as well as upon many others, committed spoliations upon me, still, I must, and I do, in the name of literary honesty, (if ever such a thing existed) and in the

face of this whole nation, most solemnly own, and most firmly grasp hold of, this passage as my property, and I hereby detain it as such. Why! my Lord, I have put these words in black print, and as far as I know, marked them by italics, at least one hundred times; and upon what ground they have been appropriated by another, with so little ceremony, I am at a loss to discover; unless it be that I, being one of the "*vulgar*," am liable to be plundered with impunity, having, at the best, no other means of redress than that of suing *in forma pauperis*. However, as it is a rule, amongst us of the vulgar, that a man may take his own wherever he finds it, I hereby lay hold on this passage, which I have found in the Morning Chronicle. This passage I have repeated, till I have been ashamed of the repetition. I had left it off; flung it out, as a drayman does an exhausted quid of tobacco; and the speech-writer of the Morning Chronicle has picked it up, and put it in the mouth of Mr. Dawson.

Seriously, my Lord, if you have done me the honour to read what I write, how often did I say, about the time when Napoleon was sent to Elba, that now the *Meeters* at the Mansion House, the *Addressers* in the Counties and from the Quarter Sessions, the *Addressers* in the great towns and manufacturing districts, the *Addressing* Yeomanry, the whole body of the *Clergy*; in short, all those who urged the government to go to war, to persevere in the war, to renew the war, and to re-renew the war, and to hire foreign troops, in order to assist in dethroning Napoleon a second time, and in restoring the Bourbons again and again, and to keep up an army in France, how often have I said, that all these persons ought to bear the burthen of taxes patiently, and to pay the interest of the debt honestly; how often have I said, that having pledged their *lives* and *fortunes* for the prosecution of so glorious a war, and having roasted oxen and sheep, and given *fêtes* to Old Blucher to celebrate the accomplish-

ment of their object, they must be the most niggardly and sneaking vagabonds that ever existed, to grudge the last farthing of those *fortunes*, the whole of which they had pledged, seeing that the government, so far from asking for their *lives*, did not seem to desire to hurt a single hair of their heads? But, it appears pretty clear, that the "*vulgar*," could be under no such pledge, seeing that they were incapable of comprehending such topics. Therefore, upon this point, there will, I imagine, be no dispute at all. The *vulgar* being left out of the question, I have not the smallest objection to say that the *life* and *fortune* men ought to bear their burdens patiently, and to pay their debts to the utmost farthing of their means.

In conclusion, my Lord, as much has, in different places, and by different persons, been said about "*the Demagogues*," who have harangued at the Parliamentary Reform Meetings, I beg leave to observe, that a "*demagogue*" means, in its true sense, a man, who, under the false pretence of intending to assist, or serve, the people, gets into possession of public money, or rather public plunder. In short, a demagogue is, or would be, a public robber; a wretch, gorged, or wishing to be gorged, somehow or other, with the public wealth, a political leech, who is sucking, or has sucked, or is trying to suck, the blood of the Commonwealth; a base wretch, who, rather than not fatten upon the public spoil, would set the whole nation together by the ears and see them cut each other's throats. Such a miscreant will talk so loudly and with such apparent sincerity about the *good of the people* and about his *attachment to the Royal Family*, and, he will express so much horror at what he calls disloyal language, that many good men are deceived by his harangues. But the greedy corn-morant, whether he talk of the people or the king, whether he profess friendship to the first or the last, he has public plunder in view; and, therefore, nothing puts him so much in a rage as those efforts which tend to cut off, or lessen, his means of obtaining and securing that plunder, by exposing his frauds

and his atrocities. A *demagogue*; that is to say, a true demagogue, when he finds himself opposed by facts or arguments, which he can neither controvert nor set up any plausible answer to, is sure to "*fall foul*," as the sailors call it, of his adversaries; that is to say, to load them with all sorts of *abuse*; to impute motives to them which they never entertained, and which he *knows* that they never entertained; to calumniate them, and to expose them, if possible, to utter ruin, and even to personal destruction. But, my Lord, the sure and certain mark, by which you shall know a true demagogue, is this; though he is excessively malignant and loud in his abuse; though he rages and foams like a storm, while he is assailing his adversaries, he is as cowardly as he is unjust and cruel, and always takes special care to make his attacks *behind the backs* of those adversaries!—Oh! how big and bold he looks then! How he swaggers! How pompously he talks! But, put him in the face of those adversaries, let him meet them foot to foot, and he sinks down his head, and hides his face as if it were pelted at with mud or rotten eggs.

Now, my Lord, these are the signs by which you shall know a true demagogue, with this addition, that, if he be *empty*, and wants filling, he is always abusing the King's ministers and bawling for a *change of them*, in order, as he pretends, to bring more wisdom and talent to the service of the Country, but as he really means, in order to get something for himself. If at any of the Public Meetings for Reform, your Lordship has perceived any persons of *this description*, then those meetings have been attended by *Demagogues*. But, my Lord, not one such man have I observed at any of those meetings. In all the Speeches and Resolutions and Petitions that I have read, *truth, sincerity, fairness* have been the main characteristics; free and open discussion has every where been invited; a strictly peaceable and orderly conduct has been observed; and in no one instance have any of the speakers attempted to interfere with the just prerogatives of the Crown *by calling for a*

change of the Ministry. All the Meetings have carefully avoided this sort of indecency, in spite of the attempts of some of that viperous faction, called *whigs*, who have still, notwithstanding the universal detestation in which they are held, been endeavouring to turn the popular tide to the account of their own selfishness.

Seeing that this is a true account of the proceedings of the Reformers, I cannot help regretting that an amendment, in the following words, which, as appears from the newspapers, was moved on Wednesday night, by the gallant LORD COCHRANE, should have found NO ONE even to SECOND it!—"That, "this House has taken a view of the "public proceedings, throughout the "country, by those persons, who have "met to petition for a Reform of this "House, and that, in justice to those "persons as well as to the people at "large, and for the purpose of convinc- "ing the people that this House wishes "to entertain and encourage no misre- "presentation of their honest intentions, "this House, with great humility, beg "leave to assure his Royal Highness, that "they have not been able to discover "one single instance, in which meetings "to petition for parliamentary Reform "have been accompanied with any "attempt to disturb the public tran- "quillity; and this House further beg "leave to assure his Royal High- "ness, that in order to prevent the "necessity of those rigorous mea- "sures, which are contemplated in "the latter part of the speech of his "Royal Highness, this House will take "into their early consideration the pro- "priety of abolishing sinecures and un- "merited pensions and grants, the re- "duction of the civil list, and of all sa- "laries which are now disproportionate "to the services, and especially, that "they will take into their consi- "deration the Reform of this House, "agreeably to the laws and constitution "of the land, this House being de- "cidedly of opinion that justice and "humanity, as well as policy, call at "this time of universal distress, for "measures of conciliation, and not

"of rigour, towards a people who have
"made so many and such great sacri-
"fices, and who are now suffering, in
"consequence of those sacrifices, all
"the calamities with which a nation can
"be afflicted."

"Not one word, my Lord, is there
here, which is not TRUE as to the
conduct of the Reformers. And yet,
no one to second the motion! There-
fore the motion was not put! Not one
member to second the gallant and
faithful Lord Cochrane! Well, my
Lord, we will not despair; nor will
we even be discouraged; nor shall
any of the arts of miscreant dema-
gogues seduce us from coolly, steady-
ly, legally and loyally pursuing our
object. Like our true-hearted leader,
Major Cartwright, we will persevere,
through good report and evil report,
bearing all things, suffering all things;
and we will not doubt, that unless
we can be shown, by the powers of
reason, to be in error, our cause will
finally triumph.

In the hope, that I shall live to see
your Lordship a friend of this cause,
and in a hearty detestation of those
who take advantage of the distresses
of the nation to make attacks upon
the Ministry for the purpose of getting
their places and emoluments, I re-
main, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S.—Pray, my Lord, read the follow-
ing, which I have just received from Li-
verpool:—

Liverpool, 28th January, 1817

Sir,—We have this day had our Special
Vestry, for the purpose of increasing the
Poor Rates, and, as you will perceive by the
underwritten, something of a novel nature

was resolved upon. *We have resolved to me-
morialize the Treasury, praying for a suspension
of the Collection of Assessed Taxes.*

The Vestry was held in St. NICHOLAS'S
Church.

THE RESOLUTIONS.—"That the increased
"and increasing numbers and necessities of
"the poor of this parish, form a subject of
"the most serious alarm to the inhabitants
"thereof. That the cause of this frightful
"increase is to be found only in the unmiti-
"gated pressure of taxation, a taxation
"which, in its insatiable cravings, swallows
"up the means of honourable employment
"for the industrious, strips the poor of their
"scanty means of existence, and threatens
"those who have hitherto been able to pre-
"serve their stations in the middle ranks of
"society, with immediate ruin and beggary.
"That to ease the country of this destructive
"pressure is the first and only reasonable
"course to be pursued, if we would save it
"from increased misery, confusion, and de-
"solation. That though this vestry cannot
"deny the imperious necessities, and just
"claims of the poor of the parish, to an ad-
"ditional rate for their maintenance, it can-
"not overlook the inability which many of
"the householders labour under to pay the
"amount of the assessments heretofore de-
"manded. That in this dilemma the only mode
"of proceeding, which presents itself to this
"Vestry, for arresting the further progress
"of pauperism, and of enabling many who
"are now tottering on its brink, to preserve
"their station in society, (the only course
"which offers itself to our adoption) appears
"to be an earnest appeal to the Government
"to forbear for a season, at least, the collec-
"tion of some part of the taxes.—That the
"only taxes which we can flatter ourselves
"with a hope that Government will be
"prevailed upon to relinquish, and those
"which, in proportion to their amount,
"seem best calculated to afford the relief
"proposed, appear to this Vestry to be the
"assessments on Dwelling Houses.—That
"in furtherance of this object, a Petition or
"Memorial, from this Vestry, be transmitted
"to the Lords of his Majesty's Treasury,
"praying them to give orders for a discon-
"tinuance of all forcible collection of the
"assessments on dwelling-houses, until the
"inhabitants of this parish are better able
"to sustain their pressure.—That the Peti-
"tion now read be adopted, and that it be
"signed by the Clerk of the Vestry on be-
"half of the Meeting."

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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